

COPY of a LETTER to a FRIEND.



May 10, 1754.

Dear Sir,

I HAD the Favour of yours, in which you desire I would commit, to Writing the Account I was Yesterday giving you, of the extraordinary Examination of *George Squires* the Gipsy's Son, on the first Day of *Elizabeth Canning's* Trial; with what other Circumstances of the Trial had come to my Knowledge.

I am always extremely happy in any Opportunity of obliging you, and have therefore set down with great Chearfulness to perform the Task.

AS I write only from Memory, I may possibly have made some Errors; but on comparing them hereafter with the Trial, which I make no Doubt, from the known Honesty and Impartiality of the present Lord Mayor, will be faithfully printed, I believe you will find them not very material.

AFTER the Council for the Prosecution had opened the Case, and examined two Women to prove the Gipsy to have been at their respective Houses, at different Distances, some Miles beyond *Abbotsbury*, *George Squires* and *Lucy Squires*, Son and Daughter of the Gipsy, who were in Court, were brought forward: When these Witnesses appeared, the Council for the Defendant told the Court, they would rest the Merits of their Cause on the Examination separately of these two Witnesses, or to that Effect: They were accordingly separated, *Lucy* being sent into a Room adjoining to the Court, and a proper Person appointed to watch her, that she might not hear her Brother's Examination.

George Squires was then sworn, and the Council for the Prosecution desired him to give an Account of their Journey, from the West of England to Mother Wells's at *Enfield-Wash*. The Substance of his Answers were, that he, his Mother and Sister, set out from a Place called *South-Perrot*, several Miles beyond *Abbotsbury*, on the 29th of December: He mentioned some Places he stop'd at on the Road, and said, they arrived at *Gibbons's*, at the Ship, at *Abbotsbury*, on Monday Evening, the 1st of January 1753, just after dark, having dined that Day a few Miles beyond *Abbotsbury*: That they staid in this Town till the 9th, and then proceeded to *London*, mentioning very circumstantially the several Stages of their Journey, with the Places they stop'd at on the Road, till at length on the 24th of January they arrived at Mother Wells's at *Enfield-Wash*.

WHEN he came to be cross-questioned by the Council for the Defendant, he answered the Interrogations concerning this Journey regularly enough: The Council then desired he would inform the Court from what Place of any Note, any Time before this 29th of December, he set out in order to make the West-Country Journey: He made here a great Hesitation, and was several Minutes before he chose to understand the Question: But on its being put to him several Ways by the Recorder and the Judges as well as the Council, he at length said, he set out from *Newington-Butts*, a few Weeks before *Michaelmas* in the Harvest Time: This gave a Space of Time of about four Months for travelling the Country, in order to get to *South-Perrot* by the 29th of December.

THE Examination will perhaps be clearer to you, if I give it by Way of Question and Answer, as it was made, rather than in the Form of a Narrative: And the Purport of it was as follows.

WHICH Way did you set out from *Newington-Butts*, in order to make this West-Country Journey? I went down into *Kent*. To what Part of *Kent*? I don't remember the Name of the Place. What did you go into *Kent* about? To meet my Mother and Sister. In what Part of *Kent* were they? I don't know the Name of the Place. How did you find them out? They were travelling the Country. What Part of the Country? In the Wilds of *Kent*. What Places did you travel through in your Journey to the Wilds of *Kent*? I don't know the Names of any Places; pray excuse me, Sir, I did not expect to be asked these Questions. No, I believe you did not; but I have many more such Questions to ask you: Well, did you find your Mother and Sister? Yes. And you don't know the Name of any Place in that Country? No, I can't remember any. Where did you go next? We went into *Sussex*. What Part of *Sussex*? I don't remember. Don't you know any Places in *Sussex* neither? Yes, I know *Hastings*, and *Rye*, and *Lewes*. Were you at either of these Places? Yes, we were at *Lewes*. How long did you stay there? I don't remember how long. What Places did you lie at in your Journey to *Lewes*? I don't know the Names of the Places. What Houses did you drink at, and what were their Signs? I don't remember the Signs of any House; pray excuse me, Sir. No, I can't excuse you, I must ask you some more Questions; where did you go to from *Lewes*? We went to *Salisbury*. What Towns or Villages did you travel through in your Way to *Salisbury*? I don't remember any. What no Names at all, of any Place or Sign, in all this long Journey to *Salisbury*; you have been very exact in your Description of Places and Signs in your Journey, from *South-Perrot* to *Enfield-Wash*, but know nothing of your Journey to that Place? Well, where did you go next from *Salisbury*? We went to *Shaftsbury*. You are got into your Knowledge now to be sure; what Towns pray did you go through from *Salisbury* to *Shaftsbury*? I don't remember the Names of any. Where did you go from *Shaftsbury*? We went to a Place called *Mear*. What House did you drink or lie at in this Town? We did not go directly into the Town but only partly by it. Do you know no Sign of any House here, or in any other Part of your Journey? I should

should be obliged to you, Mr. Squires, if you would name to me some Sign or other, a Fox, or a Goose, or a Pair of Compasses, or whatever you please? I don't remember any. Where did you lie o' Nights, in Barns or at Publick Houses? Sometimes in Barns and sometimes at Houses. And don't you know where Barns they were, nor in what Places, nor the Signs of any of the Houses? No, I don't remember any. Can you Gypsies travel up and down the Country without knowing what Places you go through? We travel through many Places without knowing them. Perhaps you may; but you can't forget all; you have mentioned no one Place yet, but *Newington-Butts, Lewes, Salisbury, Shaftsbury* and this *Mear*; I should be glad you would be so kind to name some Place or other to me? Pray excuse me, Sir, I did not expect to be asked these Questions. What Place did you go to next? We went to *South-Perrot*. So you will not tell me any Place in all this Journey; pray inform me now, Mr. Squires, what it was that induced you, with your old Mother and Sister, to make this long Journey from *Abbotsbury* to *Enfield-Wash*? I heard a Sister of mine was very ill in *London*. That was very kind of you; and pray, Sir, how did you hear she was ill? I had a Letter from her. Did you leave a Direction with her, where she should write to you? No, I can't say I left any Direction. How did she know where to send a Letter to you? She knew what Part of the Country we were travelling. Well, and where did this Letter find you? I don't justly remember the Name of the Place. Where was it directed to? I don't remember. Where is the Letter? I have not got it; I have lost it. Did this Letter come by the Post? Yes, I believe it came by the Post. To what Post-Town? I don't know. Was it directed for you at any Friend's House at *Abbotsbury*? No. So you know nothing at all how you came by this Letter? No I don't remember.—When you set out on this Journey from *Newington-Butts*, had you any Goods with you? Yes, I had a small Bundle of Goods. Of what Value? About twenty Pounds. Did you sell them all in your Journey? Yes, all but a Piece or two of Check and some Waistcoats. Where did you sell them? I don't remember the Places. You said in the first setting out on your Journey to *London*, that you pawned a Piece of Nankeen for 3s. 6d. for a Dinner of Beef-Stakes at ———— how came you to be so short of Money, when you had sold almost all your Goods, as you say; what did you do with your Money? I paid some Debts I owed with some of it, and remitted the rest to *London*. Where did you pay these Debts, and to whom? I don't remember. Who did you remit the Money to in *London*? To one Mr. Norman. Where is Mr. Norman, is he here in Court? No, Sir, he is dead. That's right; well, since Mr. Norman is dead, you can tell, to be sure, where you was when you remitted this Money, and in what Manner you did it? No, I don't remember.

WITH these and the like Interrogations and Answers, about two Hours were spent, and when his Examination was over, it was expected that *Lucy Squires* would have been called by the Council for the Prosecution, as it was before in a Manner agreed she should, and as in Justice to the Defendant and the Publick, she ought to have been; but she did not appear, though the Council for the Defendant urged it strongly for calling her.

MOST of the *Abbotsbury* Witnesses spoke so fully to the Gipsy's being in that Country, that nothing could be clearer than that TRUTH or INVENTION had suggested their Evidence: There was one Witness indeed in my Hearing, swore that he saw the Gipsy at *Abbotsbury* on the 1st of *January*, that he drank with *George Squires* and kissed his Sister.—Being asked at what Time of Day this was, he replied about One or Two o'Clock, at farthest Three: Whereas the rest of them had sworn that they came into Town after Dark, and *George Squires* had said they dined that Day some Miles beyond *Abbotsbury*. Another Witness talked of a Dance he was at, at *Gibbons's* on the 7th of *January*, but though he knew well the Gipsy, her Son and Daughter, and saw them there, he neither knew his own Partner, nor any other of the Women of the Company. But these are venial Mistakes in *Abbotsbury* Witnesses.

ON the Side of the Defendant there were several very creditable Witnesses of the Town of *Enfield* called, to prove the Gipsy to have been at *Enfield* in *December*, and through the whole Month of *January*, till she was taken at *Mother Wells's*. There was, I am told, some very strong circumstantial Evidence, produced by the Turnpike-Man of *Stamford-Hill* Turnpike, of the Girl's being carried over the Foot Stile at his Gate by two Men, on the 1st of *January* in the Night. As likewise a strong circumstantial Evidence from two or three Witnesses, that they saw *Canning* in the Road to *London* near *Wells's* House, on the Evening she made her Escape.

NOT the least Attempt was made to support the much-boasted Recantation of *Virtue Hall* *, nor to prove the Girl in any other Place than she and *Virtue Hall*, on the Gipsy's Trial, had sworn she was; though these two, with

* As *Virtue Hall* (though subpoena'd by the Prosecutors) was not called into Court on this Trial to support her Recantation, her Evidence on the Trial of the Gipsy, it is supposed, stands good in Law; at least it does in common Sense. And this was her Evidence as taken from the Sessions Paper, *February* 1753.

Virtue Hall. I know the two prisoners at the Bar; *Wells* lived at *Enfield-Wash*; I went and lived there as a Lodger. *Mary Squires* lived in the House, and had been there about seven or eight Weeks.

Q. How long before *E. Canning* was brought in?

V. Hall. About a Fortnight before, which was on the 2d of *January*, about four in the Morning, she was brought in there by two Men, *John Squires* was one of them, he is Son to *Mary Squires*, the other Man I don't know any thing of; I never saw him before.

Q. How was she dressed when brought in?

V. Hall. She had no Gown on, or Hat or Apron.

Q. Who was in the House at the Time?

V. Hall. There was I and *Mary Squires*, the Prisoner and her Daughter, the Gipsy-Man said, Mother, I have brought you a Girl, do you take her, then she asked *E. Canning*, whether she would go her Way.

Q. What did she mean by that?

V. Hall. She meant for her to turn Whore, but she would not.

* Alias *George*!

Q. Do you mention this by Way of Explanation, or as words as she said?

V. Hall. As Words as she said; then *Mary Squires* took a Knife out of a Dresser-drawer in the Kitchen, and ripped the Lace off her Stays, and pulled them off, and hung them on the Back of a Chair in the Kitchen, and pushed her up into the Room, and said—n you, go up there then, if you please; then the Man that came in with the Gipsy's Son, took the Cap off *Elizabeth Canning's* Head, and went out of Doors with it, the Gipsy-Man *John Squires*, took the Stays off the Chair, and went out with them.

Q. Where was *Elizabeth Canning*, when the two Men took away the Things?

V. Hall. She was then up in the Room.

Q. Had you ever been in that Room?

V. Hall. I had, before she was brought there, several times.

Q. What was the Name they called it by?

V. Hall. They called it by the Name of the Work-shop, there was a great deal of Hay in it, they only put Lumber in it, there was a great many Pieces of Wood, a Tobacco-mould, and this black Jug. About three Hours after the young Woman was put up, *Mary Squires* filled the Jug with Water and carried it up.

Q. How do you know it was three Hours after?

V. Hall. Then it began to be lightish.

Q.

with the Gipsy's *Alibi*, were the Points upon which, the whole Town knows the Imposture of *Elizabeth Canning's* Story was to be made quite evident, whenever she should take her Trial. The Friends of the Girl gave her the best of Characters for one in her Station, nor did the Prosecutors aim at impeaching her Character, notwithstanding the popular Slanders so liberally bestowed upon her, of her having lain-in, been salivated, &c.

I have heard indeed, that two Gipseys, *Fortune Natus* and his Wife deposed, that they lay all the Month of *January* in the very Room where the Girl and *Virtue Hall* swore she was. But surely the Evidence of these latter are at least as good as the former. Another Witness, it is said, swore that he took a Sign-Iron out of the Room in *January*, and some others swore they talked with People from a Window in that Room on some Day in *January*. But you will readily see what Regard ought to be paid to this Kind of Evidence; for if *George Squire's* Evidence, that his Mother, Sister and himself were at *Abbotsbury* on the 1st of *January*, &c. is a false Evidence, as his Prevarications strongly evince it to be, it will naturally follow, that, this Link being broken, the rest of the Chain cannot hold together, since no one Witness of them all was more capable of speaking Truth than *George Squires*, if the Fact itself he spoke to was founded in Truth, and this Fact failing, it is no strained Inference that the other Facts stand unsupported too. — As to the two extraordinary Verdicts of the Jury, the first, That *Canning* was *not* guilty of wilful and corrupt Perjury; the second, that she *was* guilty, I leave this Matter to be settled by the Lawyers: And shall only observe, That these Verdicts by no Means do any Discredit to the Cause of *Canning*.

I am, Sir, &c.

Q. Did you hear any Talk between them after she was in the Room?

V. Hall. They took care I should know but little.

Q. Has *Susannah Wells* a Husband?

V. Hall. No, she has not; when I went out of the Kitchen, I went into the Parlour, *Wells* said, *Virtue Hall*, the Gipsy Man came in and told me that his Mother had cut the Stays off the young Woman's Back, and he had got them, and she bid me not say any thing to make a Clack of it, fearing it should be known.

Q. How long was you in that House?

V. Hall. I was there a Quarter of a Year in all, if not more; I was there the whole Time *Elizabeth Canning* was there; but I never saw her once after she was put up into that Room, I was the first that missed her, I asked the Gipsy-Woman once, whether that Girl was gone? she answered what is that to you, you have no Business with it, but durst not go, to see if she was gone, if I had, very likely they would have served me so.

Q. Did you ever see the other Man after that Night?

V. Hall. No, I never did.

Q. Who lodged in the House at the time besides?

V. Hall. There was *Fortunatus* did.

Q. Did *Mary Squires* continue in the House long after this?

V. Hall. She did, till we were all taken up, which was I think on the Thursday after the young Woman was gone.

Q. What was you in that House?

V. Hall. I went there as a Lodger, but I was forced to do as they would have me.

Q. from *Mary Squires*. What Day was it that the young Woman was robbed?

Court. She says on the Morning of the 2d of *January*.

M. Squires. I return Thanks for telling me, for I am as innocent as the Child unborn.

Q. from *Wells*. How long were these People, (meaning the Gipsies) at my House in all, from first to last?

V. Hall. They were there six or seven Weeks in all, they had been there about a Fortnight before the young Woman was brought in.

Q. Did you ever see this Cap or Bed-gown before?

V. Hall. Not to my Knowledge.

Copy of a Letter concerning George Squire's Examination, &c. on Canning's Trial.



shall only observe, That these Verdicts by no means do, I discredited the Cause of Canning. of wrong and contrary Evidence; the second, that the said Verdicts, I leave the Matter to be settled by the Law. And stand unsupported too. As to the two extraordinary Verdicts of the Jury, the first, That Canning was not guilty, and the second, That he was found guilty, it is no manner of surprise that the Jury should be so divided, since no one Witness of the fact was produced, who could be sworn to the fact. The first Verdict is strongly evidence to be, it will naturally follow, that this being proven, the second Verdict is not to be expected. Suffer and himself were at Newbury, on the 17th of January, 1793, at the time of the execution, but you will readily see what regard ought to be paid to this kind of Evidence; for it cannot be a Verdict, unless it be a Verdict, and some others were taken from a Window in that Room on some day in January, and at least as good as the former. Another Witness, it is said, swore that he took a glass from out of the Room in January, in the very Room where the Girl and Victim were the day. But surely the Evidence of one Witness is not to be taken as evidence, that two Ciphers, James, Mary and his Wife, deposed, that they saw all the people of popular Stangers to universally bestowed upon her, of her having said, she had been seduced, &c. of Characters for one in her Station; nor did the Prosecution at all impeaching her Character, notwithstanding the story was to be made quite evident, whenever the should take her Trial. The Friends of the Girl say, that the best with the Ciphers, who were the Points upon which, the whole Town knew the Infamy of Elizabeth Canning's

Q. And he is the person who is the
A. Yes, I am.
Q. Did you ever see him after that time?

A. Yes, I did.
Q. Did you ever see him after that time?
A. Yes, I did.
Q. Did you ever see him after that time?
A. Yes, I did.